GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2945
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2003
TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN
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Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that according to UNICEF estimates, at least one million children are forced into the sex trade globally, of these, most are from India, Thailand and Philippines; and

(b) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken for combating trafficking in women and children by the Government?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI JASKAUR MEENA)

(a) Various reports, research findings and studies from several countries including Sri Lanka, Jamaica, the United States, Nepal, India, the Dominican Republic and West Africa conducted by UNICEF point out that about 1 million children are estimated to enter the sex trade every year. The child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation are a widespread phenomenon.

(b) The Government has taken the following steps to prevent trafficking of women and children:

(i) Drawn up a National Plan of Action (1998) and constituted a Central Advisory Committee to combat trafficking, rescue and rehabilitate victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, and activate legal and law enforcement systems to strengthen implementation of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

(ii) Set up State Advisory Committees on Trafficking for the same purpose, devolving authority and seeking to moblise greater state resources in the fight against trafficking.

(iii) The Department of Women & Child Development (DWCD) has issued guidelines to the States for effective implementation of the Plan of Action and regularly reviews State action.

(iv) The DWCD is presently reviewing the existing legal framework including the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act.

(v) DWCD has undertaken regional efforts, in alliance with NGOs, to create greater awareness of the dimensions of trafficking and increase sensitivity to victims among Government Departments, the police and judiciary, as well as within civil society at large.

(vi) The National Commission for Women is conducting active advocacy against trafficking in partnership with NGOs. It has conducted 20 workshops all over the country and has prepared a comprehensive Report on the subject.

(vii) Concerned State Governments have enacted legislation to prohibit Devdasi and prevent Jogin traditions of sexual exploitation.

(viii) Profiling NGOs that are engaged in tackling trafficking and helping to rehabilitate victims.

(ix) The DWCD has initiated a new scheme called SWADHAR for women in difficult situations applicable to victims of trafficking also. The scheme provides for shelter, counselling, medical assistance, vocational training to rescued victims.

(x) The DWCD has formulated a model grant-in-aid scheme for assistance to NGOs to combat trafficking in source areas, traditional areas and destination areas through prevention, rescue and rehabilitation. Emphasis is placed on counselling, non-formal education and vocational training.

(xi) The DWCD has notified officers of the level of Inspector and above in the CBI as Trafficking Police Officers for investigation of inter-state trafficking cases.

(xii) The DWCD has proposed to the Ministry of Home Affairs to set up a nodal agency for combating and monitoring of trafficking.

(xiii) The NHRC and DWCD have initiated a Survey on trafficking within the country. The study will also investigate the causal and behavioral aspects of all agents in trafficking. The DWCD has also commissioned a Survey to go into the magnitude of the problem, an estimate of the numbers involved and trafficking routes.